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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001244

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [ASEC](#) [EMIN](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: PAPUA -- INVESTIGATION PROCEEDS INTO RECENT
SHOOTINGS NEAR U.S. MINING OPERATION

REF: JAKARTA 1226 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: After a series of incidents, including the killing of an Australian national, a calm of sorts has descended around the Papua operations of U.S mining giant Freeport-McMoRan. Police are continuing their investigation and have named some of Freeport's Indonesian national employees as suspects in the attacks. Emerging dramatically (and briefly) from the jungle, a group claiming to represent the separatist Free Papua Movement (OPM) denied that their organization was involved in the attacks. The military continues to support police security operations. As efforts are made to arrest the perpetrators of the violence, Mission has urged the GOI to protect the rights of Papuans. END SUMMARY.

A RELATIVE CALM IN PAPUAN REGION

12. (SBU) The situation remains calm but tense around operations of U.S. mining corporation Freeport-McMoRan in eastern Indonesia's restive Papua province. There have been no further incidents since a July 22 shooting that left several Freeport Indonesian employees and police personnel wounded. (Note: The series of shootings, which began on July 11, have left three people dead--including one Freeport Australian employee--and several other injured.) Freeport is continuing to maintain heightened security precautions and has severely restricted travel on the road that has been the scene of the attacks. (Note: Freeport's Grasberg mine is the world's largest gold producer and third largest copper producer. Depending on commodity prices, the mine accounts for 2-3 percent of Indonesia's GDP.)

13. (C) Freeport's mining operations are continuing without major disruption despite the ongoing attacks. Company managers told us that the restricted travel on the road connecting the mine with the company's port site has hampered efforts to supply the operations. The company already has a backlog of approximately 1,000 shipping containers that they have been unable to transport to the mine. However, company officials are confident that they can continue operations indefinitely--albeit at reduced efficiency--despite the security restrictions unless the situation heats up more.

SUSPICION FALLS ON FREEPORT EMPLOYEES

14. (C) Police officials are questioning seven individuals arrested on July 22 (see reftels). (Note: Authorities had originally arrested 19 people but released 12 citing a lack of evidence for their involvement.) Two of those still in custody--Amon Yawame and Dominikus Beanal, both ethnic Papuans--are Freeport contract employees although the company

has not yet confirmed this publicly. A Freeport executive told us that the company is concerned some of its Papuan employees might sympathize with the separatist groups suspected of involvement in the attacks. (Note: Freeport employs approximately 22,000 people, 30 percent of whom are ethnic Papuans.)

OPM DENIES RESPONSIBILITY

15. (C) In a rare move, apparent members of a Papuan separatist group made a brief public appearance. A group of fighters claiming to represent the separatist Papua Freedom Movement (OPM) emerged from the jungle near Freeport's operation on July 26 and denied any involvement in the attacks. Press photos showed the group armed with weapons ranging from a bow and arrow to an M-16 assault rifle. It is unclear whether the group that issued a statement over the weekend represents other OPM fighters or was acting on its own. The group that made the appearance quickly melted back into the jungle.

MILITARY WORKS WITH POLICE

16. (C) The military continues to support police efforts to secure Freeport's operations although it is unclear how long this arrangement will last. There is talk that the military may take a more prominent role, Freeport officials told us they are still in "crisis response mode" and have not discussed long-term security arrangements with Indonesian authorities. Australian police are on the ground assisting the investigation into their national's slaying. Mission has urged the GOI to protect the rights of Papuans as it moves

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forward with its efforts to arrest the perpetrators. (Note: Freeport's contract of work area encompasses an area approximately the size of Rhode Island. Much of that terrain is mountainous and all of it is covered by dense jungle. These factors dramatically complicate the task of providing security.)

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